How Much is That Doggie in the Window: The True Cost of Puppy Mills

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Abstract

Each year, over a million dogs are euthanized in shelters while millions of dogs are bred in puppy mills all over the country. Without sufficient regulation, both the dogs being bred and the puppies sold are victims of dozens of injuries and health concerns. The dogs in puppy mills are bred without breaks and left to rot in tiny cages matted with feces and pests. When their useful life is up, they are murdered inhumanely. Because of lax regulation and legislative loopholes, many facilities operate unchecked and others operate even after being cited for violations. Consumers are led to believe that their precious pets were conceived in much better conditions and thus, continue to support the industry. By increasing regulation, improving the animals' quality of life, and informing consumers, the atrocities of puppy mills can be lessened.

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Puppy Mills

Definition

Puppy mill is a term used to describe a commercial dog breeding facility that profits from selling puppies on a large scale (Burger, 2014). Among the thousands of breeders and facilities, there are a few distinctions between breeding and operating a puppy mill.

First, an emphasis on quantity over quality denotes a puppy mill. Next, frequent and lax breeding is attributed to puppy mills. There is no screening for hereditary diseases and dogs are bred at every possible time, often twice a year with no rest periods. Puppy mills are also known for the practice of continuous confinement and no exercise. Breeding dogs spend their entire lives in indoor cages, leading to anxiety, social isolation, inadequate stimulation, and lack of exercise. Finally, what separates a reputable breeder from a puppy mill is the lack of veterinary care in the mills. Puppy mill staff, at times, practice veterinary medicine without a license including performing surgical procedures, giving prophylactic antibiotics, attempting to diagnose and treat diseases, and administrating antitussives to mask signs of illness (Veterinary Report on Puppy Mills, 2013).

History

Puppy mills began after World War II as the demand for agriculture dropped. Farmers found themselves in search of a new source of income and the United States Department of Agriculture began to promote the breeding, raising, and selling of dogs for a profit. Farmers then began breeding purebred dogs for money. To increase profits, they began to cut costs: decreasing space, confining animals, and breeding more dogs more often. As pet stores began needing more and

more supply, commercial puppy mills were created to fill their needs (A Closer Look at Puppy Mills).

USDA Regulation

USDA

The United States Department of Agriculture is responsible for monitoring 'commercial dog breeding facilities' as part of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). APHIS accounts for 87 percent of the Marketing and Regulatory Programs budget, which as a whole, is only 3.2 percent of the national USDA budget (FY2016 USDA Budget Summary and Annual Performance Plan, 2016). APHIS is responsible for inspecting crops, pests, zoonotic animals, livestock, imports/exports, and animal and plant diseases. As a part of this, APHIS has budgeted about $29 million a year for animal welfare causes, as outlined in the Animal Welfare Act, but only $16 million for regulatory activities. While the AWA provides national legislation covering these animals, states are left to define terms on their own and fill in many gaps in the law.

AWA

In 1966, the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA) was passed to regulate commercial breeding facilities, which had already been in operation for about 20 years. The law only covered breeders with more than three breeding females who sell puppies to pet stores or puppy brokers. Already a busy institution, the law was to be upheld by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The standards were minimal and provided little to no protection to the animals. Under the AWA, "it is legal to keep a dog in a cage only six inches longer than the dog in each direction, with a wire floor, stacked on top of another cage, for the dog's entire life" (A Closer

Look at Puppy Mills). The AWA covers the transport, purchase, sale, housing, care, handling, and treatment of dogs, cats, guinea pigs, nonhuman primates, hamsters and rabbits intended for use in research, animal exhibits, or pets. The act was passed in response to pets being stolen by "dog nappers" and sold to research facilities. An article published highlighted the story of Pepper, a Dalmatian stolen from her family's yard that died during an experimental procedure at the Bronx Hospital (Phinizy, 1965). Pepper's story gave a voice to the public, which in turn, pushed Congress to pass stricter laws. Since then, amendments have been made improving the care of the animals, yet there remains a huge need for further improvement.

Inspections

Inspections are completed by one of 120 APHIS investigators. Investigators are trained in the classroom and on the job. They are taught to recognize signs of pain and trauma as well as required to continue their education as new information is discovered. Inspectors may be required to look at statistical analyses of inspection data, review inspection reports, report activity, and enforce requests by a supervisor. They are also responsible for any additional inspections for quality including assurance inspections done before a license is awarded. These inspectors are also responsible for ensuring that the facility is in compliance with the act and that all paperwork is available for future inspection. If a facility is found to not be in full compliance with the AWA, they may suffer confiscation or euthanasia of animals, cease and desist order, monetary fines, suspension or loss of a license, and/or formal prosecution (Introductory Course for Commercial Dog Breeders, 2014).

Exemptions

There are many exemptions in the licensure requirements by the USDA. "Any person who breeds and sells dogs directly to a pet owner, at retail, for the buyer's own use as a pet… AND does not buy any animals for resale AND does not sell any animals to a research facility, dealer, or pet store" is exempt from licensing. This means that most pet stores and online breeders are not subject to any USDA inspections. Anyone with 3 or fewer breeding females on the premises is exempt from licensure, regardless of ownership. In addition, people who sell less than 25 dogs or cats a year are exempt. People who sell dogs and cats to institutions conducting research, testing, or teaching are not required to be licensed. Finally, any person who buys a dog for his or her own use and enjoyment is exempt from licensure (Introductory Course for Commercial Dog Breeders, 2014).

Types of Licenses

The USDA distributes three different types of licenses to cover the Animal Welfare Act. The three types of licenses cover different aspects of commercial breeding facilities. Licenses can be obtained by people over the age of 18 and must be registered in the principal state of business. In addition, a veterinarian must visit the facility at least once a year to be qualified for a license (Introductory Course for Commercial Dog Breeders, 2014).

Class A License

Most commercial dog breeders require a Class A License including dealers whose business includes "animals born and raised on the dealer's premises in a closed colony and any animals added for the purposes of maintain or enhancing the breeding of the colony" (Introductory

Course for Commercial Dog Breeders, 2014). They sell animals that are bred and raised at their facility.

Class B License

Class B dealers are those whose business includes "the purchase and/or resale of animals, arranging the sale of an animal, arranging the transport of animals in business dealings, and operators of animal auctions" (Introductory Course for Commercial Dog Breeders, 2014). Class B dealers get their animals from random sources like municipal shelters, humane groups, contract pounds, and other USDA Class B dealers and non-random sources like licensed breeders and exempt breeders. Based on the age, source, and length of time held by another dealer, Class B dealers are required to hold animals for specific amounts of time.

Class C License

Class C Licensees are exhibitors whose business includes the show/display of animals to the public. These include circuses, zoos, animal acts, and exotic animal exhibits at county and state fairs. Though they display animals, pet stores, fairs, rodeos, and purebred dog and cat shows are not required to obtain Class C Licenses (Introductory Course for Commercial Dog Breeders, 2014).

Licensed Facilities

There are between 2,000 and 3,000 USDA licensed breeders operating in the United States. It is estimated, however, that there are actually about 10,000, many of which are operating illegally or slipping through loopholes in legislation (A Closer Look at Puppy Mills).

Impact of the Internet Market

As the American market becomes more specialized, the Internet has given puppy mills millions of new customers. Without having to go through a puppy broker or pet store, poorly bred puppies are slipping through the cracks into customers' arms. The U.S. market has also seen an increase in imported dogs with diseases and otherwise in bad health. Without U.S. regulations, even the most minimal standards do not apply to these foreign mills. In an amendment to the 2008 Farm Bill, the USDA prohibited the importation of puppies less than six months old for the purpose of resale. Finally in August 2014, regulations were adopted at the national ports of entry. The new law dictates that the only dogs that are permitted to be imported into the continental United States and Hawaii for resale are in good health and at least 6 months of age (A Closer Look at Puppy Mills).

Impact on Animals

Breeding Stock

Mental Health

In 2011, researchers studied 1,100 dogs who had been rescued from puppy mills who had been in their homes for two years to understand the effect that puppy mill life has on them. The dogs were found to be much more afraid and have more phobias. They were also likely to have compulsive and repetitive behaviors as a result of their confinement in the mills. Compared to 'normal' dogs, they were six to eight times more likely to be fearful of humans, especially of their touch. One researched said, "This study gives us strong evidence that the dogs kept in these large-scale breeding facilities don't just suffer while they're confined there, but carry the

emotional scars out with them for years, even when they're placed in loving homes." (Veterinary Report on Puppy Mills, 2013).

Disease and Injuries

Not only are the dogs tortured mentally, but they also suffer physical ailments in their time in a puppy mill. The sounds, cages, and crowdedness all contribute to stress, decreasing the immune system and setting up the dogs for illness. Close confinement means that the dogs are likely to transfer any illnesses from one to another. Animal waste, pest infestations, rodents and their droppings all help the spread of disease. One way that staff members try to keep the dogs healthier is mass-scale drug therapy. Instead of veterinary care and sanitation, they use prophylactic antibiotics which prevent some illnesses, but mostly just build up a bacteria resistance (Veterinary Report on Puppy Mills, 2013).

Effects of Mesh Flooring

The dogs are not only susceptible to diseases and illnesses due to their surroundings, but also painful injuries. Cheap wire cages are the staple of an overpopulated puppy mill. The wire floors have multiple effects on the dogs' paws and limbs. They often remain standing for longer than is healthy because of the discomfort of lying on the wire floors. The pads on the bottom of their feet often crack and are cut under the pressure of their body weight. The dogs splay their paws to keep their balance on the floors, causing inter-digital cysts and sores that upset their gait. Because they are not walked, their nails also continue to grow, often bending back and becoming embedded into the pads of their feet. The bent nails also often get caught on the wire and are ripped off, resulting in lost blood and continued discomfort. Finally, because space is more of a concern than comfort for puppy mill operators, dogs are often kept in cages much too small. They become anxious and often get limbs stuck in the outside of the cage, resulting in

lacerations, muscle tears, and accidental amputations. Because cages are stacked, dogs often injure the limbs of other dogs above and below them (Veterinary Report on Puppy Mills, 2013).

Puppies

The dogs who live their whole lives in the mill are not the only ones affected by the conditions; the puppies often leave with lifelong ailments and short lifespans. Puppies are commonly infected with Parvovirus, Canine Brucellosis, and Distemper, which cause an early death for most. They often have kennel cough, pneumonia, parasites, fleas, and mange. Externally, puppies often leave the mills with damaged paw pads, broken jaws, severe coat matting, and nail problems (Veterinary Report on Puppy Mills, 2013).

The Humane Society of the United States published a report detailing the complaints of 2,479 puppy buyers, only a sliver of the complaints lodged nationwide. Their results are below.

Illness (intestinal parasites, pneumonia, parvovirus, ear infections, skin disorders, urinary infections)	40%
Congenital Defect	34%
Death of Puppy	15%
Temperament Issues	3%
Returned due to illness	2%
Other	6%

Some puppies originating from mills are also subject to hereditary conditions as dogs with these conditions are not often removed from the breeding stock. These conditions include:

- Orthopedic problems (e.g., early hip dysplasia, especially in larger breeds and luxating patella, especially in smaller breeds)
- Neurological disorders (often of unknown origin (idiopathic))
- Hepatic disease (e.g., liver shunts)
- Cardiac disease
- Ocular disorders (e.g., entropion)
- Umbilical hernias
- Blood disorders (e.g., von Willebrand's disease)
- Endocrine disorders (e.g., thyroid abnormalities)
- Allergies

In most instances, the mills would provide the necessary veterinary care to the new owner, but only with a vet in their network. Some mills, when faced with a large amount of complaints, disappear and cease to answer requests for refunds and assistance (Puppy Buyer Complaints, 2007-2011).

Rescues and Shelters

History

Modern animal shelters developed from pounds, where colonial towns would round up loose or unclaimed livestock. The owner of the animal would pay a fee to the pound master to reclaim their animal, which they almost always did because of the financial value of the animals. When

they transitioned to collecting dogs and cats, the reclamation rates dropped steeply because these animals did not have the same money-making ability as livestock.

The ASPCA (American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) was formed in 1866 as the nation's first animal welfare organization. Their goal was to protect mistreated horses, not dogs and cats. At this point, the shelter's main goal was to protect the public from wandering animals, not to provide them with humane care. The first organization to devote itself to the treatment of shelter animals was the Women's Branch of the Pennsylvania SPCA in Philadelphia in 1874.

Until the late 1970s, shelters focused on the humane death of the animals in their charge, without input from the veterinary community. At this time, they used methods that provided a 'quick, humane death' for the animals, like clubbing, drowning, electrocution, and carbon monoxide poisoning. The public became concerned with the treatment of shelter animals at this time, but the first article with recommendations on shelter animal treatment was not published until 1989 by Current Veterinary Therapy X journal (Miller, 2007).

Impact on Animals

Animal shelters do their best to care for dogs who have been abandoned by their owners, but the system is flawed. Most shelters lack resources, have inadequate staff, and too many animals to handle. The dogs' mental health as well as physical health is often deteriorating while they wait to be adopted or euthanized. Shelters are often loud and frighteningly chaotic environments for dogs who are used to a home or outdoor lives and this can have a negative impact. When a dog first enters a shelter they are often so stressed that they can appear anti-social or even aggressive, thus missing their best chance of being adopted. Shelter dogs often stay in their kennels all day, a

very uncomfortable experience for a dog who was trained to only go to the bathroom outside. They lack human contact as employees and volunteers often do not have the time to spend with each individual dog. Finally, dogs can get kennel cough and other illnesses during their stay which can decrease their chance of adoption.

Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a sad reality for many animals who find themselves in a shelter. With the advent of more strict spay and neuter policies and more respect for animals, euthanasia is decreasing. In 1970, they were euthanizing about 15 million pets annually and that number has dropped to 3 million while the number of companion animals has increased from 64 million to 164 million over the same time period. Shelters now euthanize about 50 percent of the animals that enter their doors. Thanks to breed specific legislation, some municipal shelters are required to put down certain breeds of dogs, mostly bully breeds (pit bulls, American Staffordshire terriers, bull dogs) at intake without a temperament assessment (Serrie, 2004). Though it is a much more humane process than it was in the 1970s, it is still a tragedy of the animal care system.

Pet Stores

Revenue

The pet store industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the United States. According to a national poll done by Edge Research, 37 percent of Americans, or 88 million people, expected to buy a gift for a pet during the holiday season in 2012. The expected revenue from these sales totals more than $2.5 billion in that holiday season alone. 59 percent of pet gift givers reported that they would consider shopping in a store that also sells puppies, thus supporting the institutions that fund puppy mills (ASPCA "No Pet Store Puppies" Campaign: Don't Buy into

Animal Cruelty this Holiday Season, 2013). This is the most obvious reason why they still exist, the profits are massive.

Space Requirements

The USDA has created space requirements for dogs' kennels. The kennel must be 6 inches taller than the top of the dog's head and six inches longer than the length from the nose to the base of the tail. For dams, or dogs with nursing puppies, 5% of the mother's space must be added for each puppy. There is no requirement for exercise space for dams or for puppies under the age of 12 weeks (Minimum Space Requirement for Dogs). This space does not provide enough room for the dogs to get the necessary amount of exercise for a healthy mind and body. The dogs can be stacked and crammed into cages together. All of this, however, also only applies to USDA licensed kennels and stores and allows for even worse conditions for those operating illegally.

Adoption Trends

Mutual Selection

In recent years, people have been experiencing a more personal relationship with their pets as pet ownership becomes more important in their lives. One implication of this change is in how they choose their new pets. People now attribute their choices to mutual selection. One pet owner said, "We did not pick [our dog]. He picked us! While we were there he came running up to us and just would not let us alone. Kept following us around wagging his tail. He had been there for over a year waiting for us to come." This experience can be explained by the spike in oxytocin, a bonding hormone, when looking in a dog's eyes, similar to bonding with a child (America's Pet Owners, 2015).

Pet Personification

Another relatively new type of interaction with pets is anthropomorphizing them. Consumers are beginning to see their pets more and more as humans, and equals. According to Mintel, "in the same way that parents share photos of their kids on social media, many pet parents share photos of their fur babies and take them on vacations." This is seen in how they treat the animals, especially in their permissiveness (America's Pet Owners, 2015).

Adoption Sources

Breeders/Pet Stores

The most expensive ways a person acquires a dog are through breeders and pet stores. There are many types of breeders from which a person can acquire an animal. The first and most easily tracked is a licensed breeder. These people keep meticulous records of their dogs' lineage as well as their litters, health, and other conditions. They cost anywhere from $500-25,000 for an AKC certified puppy. These dogs compete in shows and are known for their lineage. There are, however, backyard breeders who use their dogs much like the pet stores' sources. Backyard breeders and puppy mills breed their dogs as products over and over until they cannot bear any more puppies. These puppies are often hundreds of dollars, but are riddled with disease and many die very early.

Friends/Family

Another way a person can acquire a dog is through friends and family. In this case, a dog is often accidentally impregnated and the puppies are dispersed through the owner's personal network. In many cases, the father of the puppies is unknown, so their medical predispositions, size, breed, and disposition are unknown. These puppies are often given away for free.

Animal Shelters/Rescues

Finally, a person can acquire a dog through a local shelter or rescue organization. These groups collect stray animals, accept owner surrenders, and care for confiscated animals. They have wide varieties of dogs with varying backgrounds, mostly unknown. Because most dogs come into shelters as strays, staff must guess at their age, breed, disposition, and skills. Shelters tend to charge $75-200 per animal. Rescue organizations have the ability to be more selective with their animals. Because they pull dogs from shelters, they can specialize in a certain breed or characteristic. Rescues often operate as foster-based systems and charge $150-400 per dog because they put more time and money into each animal than shelters.

Ways to Decrease Puppy Mills

One of the greatest tragedies in the world of animal care is the millions of dogs euthanized in shelters each year while commercial breeding facilities continue to overbreed dogs in deplorable conditions. While these breeding facilities are regulated by the USDA, this regulation has little effect on the dogs themselves as their conditions are often hidden from representatives. With low costs and high sales prices, puppy mills are very profitable. Because of this, increased regulation and legislation are needed to protect the dogs, both in the puppy mills and those euthanized in shelters.

Outlaw Commercial Dog Breeding

The most straightforward way to stop this is to simply outlaw all commercial breeding facilities. Currently, the USDA inspects commercial dog breeding facilities at undetermined intervals. During these inspections, they determine whether or not they are compliant with space and care requirements. Because of a lack of staff, these inspections are often lax and done quickly. If an

aspect of the mill is not up to standards, the mill has 90 days to fix it until their license is revoked (Licensing and Registration Under the Animal Welfare Act, 2005). To outlaw these facilities, any space, health, or environmental violations should mean permanent revocation and immediately ceasing operations. Any facility not treating the dogs with respect should not be allowed. With lax inspections, however, this policy is not likely to be implemented.

Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act (PUPS)

Senator Richard Durbin proposed a new bill in 2013 which would decrease the negative impacts of puppy mills. The Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act would create a new designation for commercial breeders and require more comprehensive care for animals in their facilities. Though the proposed act has little effect on how the dogs are housed for most of the day, it is aimed at providing the dogs with daily exercise.

The exercise must allow the dog to: move sufficiently to develop or maintain normal muscle tone and mass as appropriate for the age, breed, sex, and reproductive status of the dog, achieve a running stride and must not be a forced activity (other than a forced activity used for veterinary treatment) or other physical activity that is repetitive, restrictive of other activities, solitary, and goal-oriented.

The exercise area must be separate from the primary enclosure if the primary enclosure does not provide sufficient space to achieve a running stride and must have solid flooring or nonsolid, non-wire flooring that is determined to be safe for a dog of their breed, size, age, that doesn't have sharp or protruding edges, and is not able to catch on paws or nails. In addition, the exercise area must be free of pest and vermin, cleaned every day, and must not allow the dogs to escape. According to the law, the only dogs not required this exercise time are those who veterinarians

have declared it unsafe based on their condition or health (Puppy Uniform Protection and Safety Act, 2013).

Being required to remove the dogs from their primary enclosures each day would have some positive effect on their design (making stacking and overcrowding more of a burden), but the act needs to provide for safer living conditions for the life of the dog, not just once a day for it to be comprehensive.

Increase Commercial Breeding Regulations

A more feasible way to stop the mistreatment of dogs in breeding facilities is to increase regulations. Not only will these regulations increase the quality of life for the dogs, but they will also decrease the profitability of the operation. With fewer profits, fewer people would be willing to take part in the practice and decrease the propensity to hide the dogs and risk litigation. The USDA currently has some requirements for space, but with millions of dogs coming out of puppy mills in horrendous conditions, the requirements are not sufficient. One way to remedy this would be to have stricter, nationwide legislation with no room for state interpretation.

No More Than One Litter per Year

Commercial breeding facilities encourage quantity over quality, forcing dogs to breed more than is natural for them. The American Kennel Club (AKC) suggests that dams are not bred in consecutive heats. Small breed dogs can go into heat 3 times a year and large breed dogs only once every 12-18 months. As the resting period needed depends on the dog's size, no dog should ever be breed more than once a year. With heat lasting 3 weeks, canine gestation lasting an average of 63 days, and an average of 6 weeks of care after birth, a female dog's rest period is not as long as it seems with only one litter a year: she spends about a third of a year with that

litter (Responsible Dog Breeding). With more diligent regulation and restricted breeding, the dogs' quality of life will improve as the mills' profit decreases.

Increase Space/Care Regulations

Another option to improve the lives of dogs in commercial breeding facilities is to increase the space and care regulations. Each step that improves the lives of dogs in mills is a positive one until the day that they can be fully outlawed. The American Veterinary Medical Association has outlined the minimum standards required to have healthy dogs, both from a mental and a physical standing. In their proposal, they include that any facility found to not follow the regulations to immediately cease operations.

For housing, the AVMA suggests:

- At least partial solid flooring, with only safe nonsolid flooring where necessary
- Adequate space appropriate to the age, size, weight, and breed of the dog, and that allows the dog to engage in normal body movements, including the ability to sit, stand up, turn about freely, or lie fully recumbent in a natural position
- At least the mathematical square of the sum of the length of the dog in inches as measured from the tip of the nose to the base of its tail, plus 6 inches. Divide this product by 144 to calculate the minimum required floor space, in square footage, that must be provided by a primary enclosure
- The interior height of a primary enclosure must be at least 6 inches higher than the head of the tallest dog in the enclosure when it is in a normal standing position
- Providing protection from harmful extremes of temperature, air movement, moisture, light and other climatic elements

- All excreta, feces, debris, and food wastes must be removed from enclosures, at least once daily, and from under primary enclosures as often as necessary, to prevent an excessive accumulation of feces and food waste, to prevent soiling of dogs contained in the enclosure, and to reduce disease hazards, insects, pests and odors
- The facility shall have sufficient lighting by natural and/or artificial means as to allow observation of the physical condition of the dogs being housed, and to permit inspection and cleaning of the facility
- A diurnal lighting cycle (lighting only during the day)
- Adequate ventilation shall be provided to minimize odors, drafts, ammonia levels, and to prevent the condensation of moisture
- An effective program for the control of insects, external parasites affecting dogs, and birds and mammals that are pests, must be established and maintained so as to promote the health and well-being of the dogs and reduce contamination by pests in dog areas
- Provide in their primary enclosure some form of a den, which shall comprise at least a solid floor and visual barrier, as to allow rest and retreat
- All bitches with litters shall be provided an appropriate whelping box, which should provide means to contain the puppies during whelping, and provide some form of substrate, insulation or heat source so as to prevent dissipation of heat so that all puppies are able to maintain appropriate body temperature

The AVMA also outlines the mental care and stimulation of the dogs in commercial breeding facilities. First, dogs cannot be left in a primary housing area without stimulation for an extended period of time. They should be provided with toys or activities in their housing area so that they do not develop neurotic tendencies. Dogs must also be provided with the opportunity for

locomotive activity on a daily basis. This should allow for an animal to move sufficiently to develop and/or maintain normal muscle tone and mass as pertinent for the age, breed, sex and reproductive status of the dog and should include enough space for the animal to reach a running stride. The locomotive activity must not be forced and should be kept free of pests and feces. The exercise area should be separate from their primary area to encourage social activities, helping the dogs to be mentally stable.

To further improve the lives of the dogs, social stimulation is needed. As social animals, dogs need interaction with other dogs and with humans. The AVMA states that dogs need to be provided full body contact with compatible dogs every day except when a veterinary suggests that they do not. In addition, dogs need positive human interactions on a daily basis. Simply feeding the animals is not enough and the human interaction time should be separate from feeding times.

Dogs should also have dedicated veterinary care to ensure their physical health. At minimum, dogs should have one annual veterinary check to maintain preventative care for things like heartworm, fleas, and other illnesses. Each dog's welfare should be checked and evaluated daily by a staff member so that no dog suffers from unnoticed illnesses. Any illnesses and injuries require prompt veterinary treatment. Finally, at the end of its life, dogs should be humanely euthanized by a veterinarian (AVMA, 2010).

Impose Price Ceiling on Dog Sales

With some purebred puppies being sold anywhere from $1,000 to $25,000, a price ceiling would decrease the profits of selling puppies and decrease the amount of puppies bred. In addition, decreasing the price a breeder can charge decreases their margins and may lead them to take

more care with each puppy because they simply cannot afford to just replace them. The price ceiling would also ensure that the breeder has to ensure that each puppy has a buyer before they breed because the cost of raising puppies and not selling them is not absorbed by the cost of selling a few of the puppies. Finally, making the cost closer to that of a rescue dog could decrease the prestige of a purebred dog and make shelter dogs a more popular choice.

Limit Number of Dogs Owned, Intact

To decrease puppy mills and increase quality of life, the government could limit the number of intact dogs owned by any one household or facility. An intact dog is one that is able to breed and has not had a spay/neuter surgery. Upon adoption, a dog should be designated as either exclusively a pet/working dog or breeding stock. While some cities already require a dog to be spayed/neutered if they do not intend to be bred, there is no national law covering spay/neuter procedures or the amount of dogs a person can own. Limiting the number of intact dogs owned can decrease both accidental breeding and the squalid conditions in puppy mills. While many mills currently slip under the radar with regulations, limiting the number of dogs owned would provide a clear path for litigation. Only owning, for example 5 dams, would increase the amount of time spent with each dog and, hopefully, increase their quality of care. Finally, with so few dogs, the profits collected by a puppy mill operator would be much fewer and less people would be willing to enter the business for little profit.

Pet Store Regulation

As the most visible way puppy mill dogs are sold and distributed, regulating pet stores is another way to help stop puppy mills. Though there are consumers who know the horrors of their new puppy's upbringing and are not affected by it, many pet stores obscure their sources and lead

consumers to believe that the puppies were reared responsibly. Many pet stores use pictures of puppies in fields to advertise their dogs, while in reality, the puppy has likely never stepped foot outside of confinement. Pet stores are an important battleground in the fight against puppy mills because they are visible to most customers are puppy mills are obscured.

Must Sell Shelter Dogs

With the United States euthanizing over a million dogs every year, one option is to force pet stores to exclusively sell shelter dogs in their stores. In the US, 59 cities and counties have banned the sale of commercially bred dogs and only allow small breeders and rescue organizations. In these cities, many pet stores that previously sold puppy mill puppies are turning to shelters to allow them to adopt out puppies on their behalf. Though the store owners miss out on the income of adopting out puppies at such high prices, the adoption events bring in customers and drive sales. In addition, with more and more customers discovering the truth about the puppies sold, they are less likely to buy them. A proponent for such legislation in Chicago, PAWS Chicago Founder, Paula Fasseas states, "We should also see a drop in relinquishments by owners who have purchased a puppy from a pet store and find that it is too much work or medical bills are too expensive. And let's not forget the taxpayer benefit. There will be less of a burden because fewer animals would be winding up at city impoundment facilities." (Mazzola, 2014). By adopting out shelter dogs, the shelters have fewer dogs to care for and as healthier dogs, the shelters receive fewer medical cases.

Must Display Sourcing Information

Finally, one way to decrease the sales of puppy mill dogs would be to be more upfront with where the dogs are coming from and the conditions there. If the puppy mills cannot be outlawed, then pet stores and online sources should be required to name the source, include the number of dogs housed there, and list any violations to the Animal Welfare Act with the information about the dog. While some stores will include the name of the breeder, they are made to sound like small, loving breeders where the puppies and their parents are cared for. By including the number of dogs in the facility and their violations, the consumer can get a better idea of the business they are supporting. Even with internet sales, where the truth is easier to hide, the information should be readily available to the consumer. With more informed consumers, the harsh realities of puppy mills will be easily fought.

Conclusion

There are many ways to decrease the amount of dogs living terrible lives in puppy mills. The most feasible and impactful ways would be to increase the frequency of inspections, the enforcement of existing laws, and to make sourcing information readily accessible to consumers. The combination of these three practices would not only make any violations known to the state, but also to the people who are buying the puppies. As emotional, social animals, dogs are not products and should not be kept in such terrible conditions for human profit. By increasing the costs associated with running a puppy mill and increasing the standards of care required, steps can be taken to end puppy mills and let dogs be man's best friend again.

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